

PORTRAIT *of* SPAIN

MASTERPIECES FROM THE PRADO



A BRIEF HISTORY

The Museo Nacional del Prado Collection narrates the story of Spanish history and culture. The Prado is in the centre of Madrid — the Spanish capital — and is a neoclassical building designed by Spanish architect Juan de Villanueva.

In 1819, the Prado was opened to the public to show art works belonging to the Royal Collections, works collected over centuries by the Spanish royal families, demonstrating the equal merit of Spanish art with that of the rest of Europe and reflecting the changes occurring in Spanish society.

Currently, the Prado Collection comprises around 7600 paintings, 1000 sculptures, 4800 prints and 8200 drawings, along with a wide range of decorative art objects and historical documents.

did
you
? know

STUDENT WORKSHEET | SECONDARY

1550–1770: PAINTING IN AN ABSOLUTIST STATE

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are often called the ‘Spanish Golden Age’. During this period, the Spanish Habsburg monarchy enjoyed hegemonic* status in world affairs. The royal court and the church held tremendous power between them and were the main patrons of painting.

*Hegemony: Leadership or dominance, especially by one country or social group over others. Derived from the Greek word, *hēgemon* (leader).

Portraits of Powers: Kings and Buffoons

In the sixteenth century, the royal court would commission prominent Spanish and foreign painters to come Madrid to work primarily as royal portraitists. Portraits were constructed to convey a clear message to the viewer about the sitter’s identity and power.

did
you
know?

When Spanish monarchs presented themselves in public, they acted like living statues.

Diego Velázquez had unusually easy access to the king and the royal family. Philip IV thought so highly of him that he made the artist a trusted member of the royal entourage and would not let anyone else paint his portrait — he was known as *pintor del rey* (‘first painter to the king’).

Velázquez made several changes to this portrait of the king, which are clearly visible to the untrained eye. *Can you list two?*

Portrait
in Spanish is:
retrato



Diego Velázquez | Philip IV as hunter (Felipe IV en traje de cazador) (detail) c.1633

YEARS 8–10

What type of background has the artist painted in this art work?

What does the location suggest of the recreational pursuits of noblemen and of the landscape of Spain?

YEARS 11–12

Describe how Velázquez has portrayed the king’s sense of majesty without using the typical iconographic references associated with his sitter’s royal status.

How is Velázquez’s portrait of the king different to others in this room?

Physically unique people in Spanish society were sometimes given a place in the royal court as jesters or buffoons. They were seen as curiosities and evidence of the variety of human experience.



Diego Velázquez | Francisco Lezcano, known as ‘the boy from Vallecas’ (Francisco Lezcano, ‘el Niño de Vallecas’) (detail) c. 1636–38

YEARS 8–10

Buffoonery was much like slapstick comedy: it provided entertainment for the royal court and a means of living for some people.

Think of some different television shows or entertainers that use this kind of comedy.

YEARS 11–12

Painters for the Spanish royal court frequently composed independent portraits of dwarfs and jesters to trial compositions that would have been inappropriate for kings, nobles and other patrons.

How has Velázquez used composition, colour and light to affect how you feel when viewing this portrait?

Mythology as the Language of Power

Many royal families in Europe identified with the heroism of mythological figures. Although scenes like *Hercules and Cerberus* were held in high regard in the Spanish literature and art of the time, such paintings were considered unsuitable for display in churches and chapels. They could be seen only in the privacy of the royal court.

Hercules was claimed as the mythical founder of the Spanish Habsburg monarchy. The aristocracy would often commission images of heroic figures, like this one, to decorate their palaces as a way of emphasising their link to noble antiquity.

Mythology in Spanish is: **mitología**



Francisco de Zurbarán | *Hercules and Cerberus (Hércules y el Cancerbero)* (detail) c.1634

YEARS 8–10

As you walk through this room, note down two other mythological subjects or works depicting heroes.

How have they been represented?

YEARS 11–12

Cerberus was known as the 'Hound of Hades' (Hades was the underworld) who stopped the living from crossing into the land of the dead.

How has Hercules been represented in this work? What is he pictured doing?

What would this mean to the Spanish nobility?

Painting and Religion: Sacrifice

Religion was present in almost every aspect of public and private life in Spain during this period; as a result, sacrifice, intimacy and saintliness were the main subjects of paintings.

This emotive art work by Titian depicts Christ carrying the cross on the way to Calvary, assisted by Simon of Cyrene.

Painting and religion in Spanish is: **Pintura y religion**



Titian | *Christ carrying the Cross (Cristo con la Cruz a cuestras)* (detail) c.1565

YEARS 8–10

List three elements that Titian has depicted that denote Christ's suffering.

Why is it important for the viewer to connect with Christ's suffering?

YEARS 11–12

Titian invites the viewer to connect with the emotion of the scene through painting Christ's gaze looking directly out at you.

Describe the placement of the figures in the frame.

How does this work make you feel?

Who is Simon of Cyrene and why is his inclusion important?

Saints were very important in Spanish painting as they were models of ideal human behaviour. Today, people still pray to saints for help with different situations.

Can you fill in the spaces below to describe what each saint represents?

Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of

Saint Anthony, patron saint of lost things and missing persons

Saint , patron saint of travel

Saint Valentine, patron saint of

Saint Matthew, patron saint of money and finances

Saint , patron saint of learning

Saint Patrick, patron saint of

Civil Society: The Still Life

Still-life painting gained popularity in the seventeenth century as a way for artists to display their technique and still make money from commissions.

Still life
in Spanish is:
bodegón



YEARS 8–10

Still-life painting also presented an opportunity for artists to explore the meaning symbolised by different objects.

Connect the symbol with its possible meaning:

apples

blood of Christ

dead bird

temptation and original sin

grapes

transience of life

The dead bird in this still life could also refer to the myth of the Greek painter Zeuxis who depicted grapes so convincingly that even birds flew down to peck at them.

did
you
? know

YEARS 11–12

How many different textures and surfaces have been represented in Juan de Espinosa's work?

1770–1850: A CHANGING WORLD

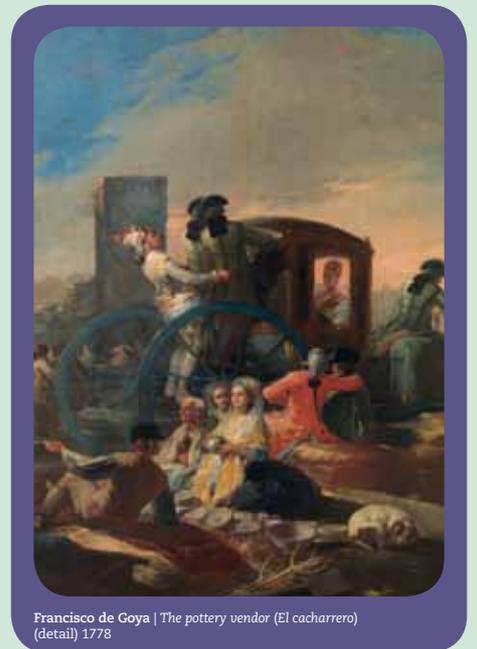
Images of Society

Everyday scenes or genre scenes, such as Goya's *The pottery vendor*, were called *costumbrista*. They showed the life of the *pueblo* (the people) in day-to-day activities. This painting was created as a cartoon, which was a preparatory painting for a tapestry. The tapestry was intended to hang on the walls of the Royal Palace in Madrid. The cartoon wasn't available for public viewing until the late nineteenth century, when it entered the Prado's Collection.

YEARS 8–10

What is your definition of a cartoon?

Draw a cartoon sketch of a scene from the past week that you have found entertaining.



YEARS 11–12

Why would the nobility find pictures like this so entertaining? Discuss the social hierarchies and stereotypes within this image.

What media do we use for entertainment and information today?

The Meadow of San Isidro may be viewed as an allegory of the ages of man, wherein the circular movement of the pilgrims following the rider evokes the course of a lifetime.



José del Castillo | The Meadow of San Isidro (La pradera de San Isidro) (detail) 1785

YEARS 8–10

What figures can you see that show the different stages of human life?
What is the allegorical meaning contained in this painting?

YEARS 11–12

This work presents a divided composition in which three distinct scenes occupy the foreground.

How do these separate scenes present the viewer with diverse insights into the lifestyles, relationships and social conventions in Madrid at that time?

did
you
? know

An allegory (*alegoría*) is a story that has a deeper, more abstract meaning to be found under the general, surface meaning.

The Portrait and Daily Life

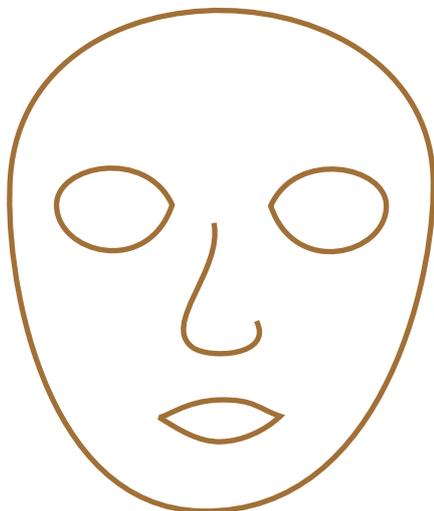
Goya was well known for breaking with tradition. In his portrait of Maria Antonia Gonzaga, he has avoided the stately formality of the usual full-length portrait by using a three-quarter format. Although still quite formal, this format affords a feeling of intimacy. Goya captures the subject's strong character, which is evident in her fixed and decisive gaze.

Compare this portrait to those from the first room.

What difference can you see between these two periods?
Consider the following:

- the format of the composition
- the intimacy of the work

Make an artistic portrait of a classmate using words. See if your classmates can recognise who you have described.



Francisco de Goya | Maria Antonia Gonzaga, Marchioness widow of Villafranca (Maria Antonia Gonzaga, marquesa viuda de Villafranca) (detail) c. 1795

Reason and madness



Francisco de Goya | *Esto es lo peor!* (That is the worst of it!) (detail) | Plate 74 from *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (The Disasters of War) | Published 1863

YEARS 8–10

Why do you think Goya used an animal to stand for a person? Can you think of other instances in which people have been represented as animals?

(Hint: Think of nursery rhymes and fairytales)

YEARS 11–12

Identify the key themes in Goya's Disasters of War series. How has Goya used satire to convey his feelings? Why do you think he included that quote in the etching?

What was the advantage of prints over paintings?

This image takes its title from Giovanni Battista Casti's poem *Gli animali parlanti* (*The Court and Parliament of Beasts*), published in 1802; it shows a she-wolf writing the words of one of its verses: 'Wretched humanity, you are to blame.'

1850–1900: THE THRESHOLD OF MODERN SPAIN

The Traditionalist Reflection: Spain's History, Literature and Landscape

During the nineteenth century, many artists believed that landscape painting should accurately represent a real place. Realistic landscape painting was popular because it provided artists with an opportunity to expand their repertoire of subjects and could easily be incorporated into any household decoration.

Spain's
History, Literature
and Landscape
in Spanish is:
**La historia de España,
la literatura y el
paisaje**



Aureliano de Beruete | *Bellas Vistas District (Barrio de Bellas Vistas)* (detail) 1906

YEARS 8–10

Bella Vistas means 'beautiful views'. Describe what it would feel like walking down a street in the *Bella Vistas* suburb.

How has the artist created that feeling for the viewer?

How many words can you think of to describe your favourite 'bella vista'?

Here are a few to get you started...

Panoramic, bird's-eye, peaceful, rainforest . . .

YEARS 11–12

Compare and contrast Beruete's colour palette and technique to other landscape examples within this exhibition.

How did artists like Beruete avoid ivory, blacks and dark tones when rendering shades and shadows in their paintings?

What group of French artists could have influenced the way Beruete painted?

José Moreno Carbonero chose to paint a scene from Miguel de Cervantes's novel *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, widely recognised as the first modern novel. The central characters — the knight Don Quixote and his squire, Sancho Panza — came to be seen as representatives of the 'Spanish' way of being. This painting recalls a scene in which Sancho Panza is reunited with his donkey.

Describe the scene that Carbonero has painted.

Can you see the humour in this painting?

(Hint: Read the label for extra clues!)

How has posture, composition and light been used to suggest Panza's relationship to the donkey?

Miguel de Cervantes was a contemporary of William Shakespeare in England.

If you were to paint a scene from a Shakespearean play, which would you choose? Why?



José Moreno Carbonero | Sancho Panza recovers his lost donkey (*Encuentro de Sancho Panza con el Rucio*) (detail) c.1894

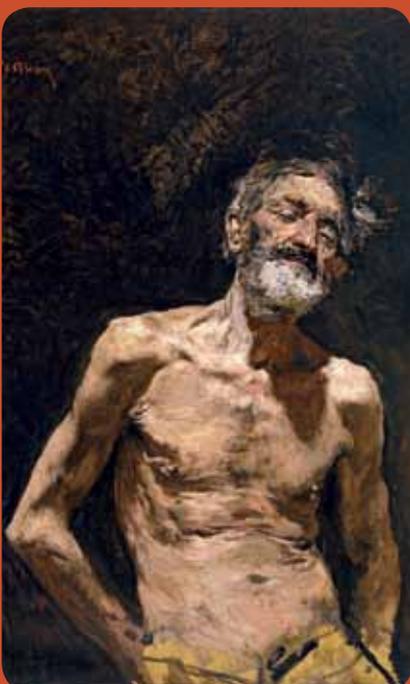
Spanish Painting Mirrors Itself

These two paintings by Velázquez and Fortuny show very different representations of the male figure. They reflect some of the social and political changes that occurred across the two intervening centuries.

Compare and contrast these two works. Think about the ideal and the real, and consider how art materials and composition have been used.

Which work presents the subject in the most empathetic light? How?

What technological invention contributed to the change from idealistic to expressionistic representation in the mid 1800s?



Mariano Fortuny | Elderly nude man in the sun (*Viejo desnudo al sol*) (detail) 1871



Diego Velázquez | Mars (*El dios Marte*) (detail) c.1638

Drawing activity:

Combine traits from these two images to create your unique representation of the male figure.

Which aspects of the real and idealised styles will you combine?



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CAPTIONS

Cover:

Leon-Augusto Asselineau | *View of the Royal Museum of Painting in Madrid (Vista del Real Museo de Pintura de Madrid)* (detail) 1832-36 | Lithograph | 29.5 x 46.5cm | G919

Diego Velázquez | *Philip IV as hunter (Felipe IV en traje de cazador)* (detail) c.1633 | Oil on canvas | 191 x 126cm | P1884

Diego Velázquez | *Francisco Lezcano, known as 'the boy from Vallecas'* (Francisco Lezcano, 'el Niño de Vallecas') (detail) c. 1636-38 | Oil on canvas | 107 x 83cm | P1204

Francisco de Zurbarán | *Hercules and Cerberus (Hércules y el Cancerbero)* (detail) c.1634 | Oil on canvas | 132 x 151cm | P1247

Titian | *Christ carrying the Cross (Cristo con la Cruz a cuestas)* (detail) c.1565 | Oil on canvas | 67 x 77cm | P438

Juan de Espinosa | *Octagonal still life with bunches of grapes (Bodegón ochavado con racimo de uvas)* (detail) 1646 | Oil on canvas | 67 x 68cm (octagon) | P7924

Francisco de Goya | *The pottery vendor (El cacharrero)* (detail) 1778 | Oil on canvas | 259 x 220cm | P780

José del Castillo | *The Meadow of San Isidro (La pradera de San Isidro)* (detail) 1785 | Oil on canvas | 49 x 99.5cm | P7723

Francisco de Goya | *María Antonia Gonzaga, Marchioness widow of Villafranca (María Antonia Gonzaga, marquesa viuda de Villafranca)* (detail) c. 1795 | Oil on canvas | 87 x 72cm | P2447

Francisco de Goya | *Esto es lo peor! (That is the worst of it!)* (detail) | Plate 74 from *Los Desastres de la Guerra (The Disasters of War)* | Published 1863, Madrid | Etching and burnishing, with surface tone, on ivory-coloured wove paper | 17.9 x 22cm | G719

Aureliano de Beruete | *Bellas Vistas District (Barrio de Bellas Vistas)* (detail) 1906 | Oil on canvas | 57.5 x 81cm | P4246

José Moreno Carbonero | *Sancho Panza recovers his lost donkey (Encuentro de Sancho Panza con el Rucio)* (detail) c.1894 | Oil on canvas | 48 x 78cm | P7816

Mariano Fortuny | *Elderly nude man in the sun (Viejo desnudo al sol)* (detail) 1871 | Oil on canvas | 76 x 60cm | P2612

Diego Velázquez | *Mars (El dios Marte)* (detail) c.1638 | Oil on canvas | 179 x 95cm | P1208

All art works are in the Collection of the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid | © Photographic Archive, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

Francisco de Goya

Francisco de Goya was a Spanish court painter who broke with tradition to establish a unique personal approach to painting.

He is one of the world's best-known Spanish artists who, through his art works, recorded a period of significant transition in Spain.

Born in 1746, Goya studied painting in the workshop of José Luzán in Zaragoza. After studying, he travelled to Italy before returning to Madrid around 1780.

An extended period of undiagnosed illness in 1792–93 left Goya completely deaf at the age of 46, which significantly influenced the direction of his work. Goya lived and worked as an artist until the age of 82 — this was a time when such longevity was rare.



Quick facts

- Goya was appointed as court painter to Charles IV in 1789.
- Goya's birth house and a museum dedicated to his work are located in Fuendetodos, Spain. It is a small town with a population of 174, but nearly 25 000 people visit this village each year.

Front: Francisco de Goya | *María Antonia Gonzaga, Marchioness widow of Villafranca (María Antonia Gonzaga, marquesa viuda de Villafranca)* (detail) c. 1795 | Oil on canvas | 87 x 72cm | P2447

Back: Francisco de Goya | *Self-portrait (Autorretrato)* (detail) 1815 | Oil on canvas | 45.8 x 35.6cm | P723

Collection: Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid |
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Titian

Titian was born in Pieve di Cadore, Italy (approx. 110km north of Venice), around 1488 and is well known for his use of colour.

He completed his training in Venice, receiving local success early in his career.

After this he began to receive many commissions and became the principal painter for the imperial court of Charles V as well as also the official painter of Charles V's son, Philip II of Spain, despite never travelling to Spain. He was so admired by Charles and Philip that they acquired almost anything he sent them. The works he created became the prototype of a court portrait, which many other artists referenced.

Titian contributed to many genres of art including painting altarpieces, portraits, mythologies and pastoral landscapes with figures. His work continued to be very influential into the seventeenth century, well after his death.



Quick facts

- Titian is the anglicised version of the artist's name.
- In 1525, he married Cecilia (who tragically died in 1530) and they had three children who were all named after famous figures from ancient Rome: Pompeo, Orazio and Lavinia.
- The Prado holds more than 40 paintings by Titian.

Front: Titian | *Christ carrying the Cross (Cristo con la Cruz a cuestras)* (detail) c.1565 | Oil on canvas | 67 x 77cm | P438

Back: Titian | *Self-portrait (Autorretrato)* (detail) c.1567 | Oil on canvas | 86 x 65cm | P407

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Diego Velázquez

Diego Velázquez was born in Seville, Spain, in 1599 and was trained by Spanish painter and scholar Francisco Pacheco. His characteristic style of painting naturalistic religious and folkloric scenes in nature was developed during his training.

Velázquez is known as the most prominent court painter for King Philip IV. He painted the King from 1623 until his own death in 1660. Although he mostly produced portraits of King Philip IV and his courtly environment, Velázquez also created art works focusing on sacred history, mythology and significant historical scenes.



Quick facts

- Velázquez married the daughter of his teacher, Francisco Pacheco.
- The king funded two trips that Velázquez made to Italy during his time as court painter, around 1630 and 1652.
- The Prado holds 50 of Velázquez's works in its Collection. This is more than one third of the art works that he produced in his lifetime.

Front: Diego Velázquez | *Philip IV as hunter (Felipe IV en traje de cazador)* (detail) c.1633 | Oil on canvas | 191 x 126cm | P1184

Back: Diego Velázquez | *Las Meninas* (detail) c.1656 | Oil on canvas | 318 x 276cm | P1174

Collection: Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid |
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El Greco

El Greco was one of the most outstanding artists during the reign of Philip II. He was born in Crete, Greece, in 1541, and arrived in Spain in 1576, living mainly in Toledo where he created many of his well-known images.

One of El Greco's great achievements was bringing a sound knowledge of Italian portraiture to Spain and thus influencing Spanish portrait painting. He spent two years in Venice with access to the works of Tintoretto and Titian, which proved to have a lasting and profound influence on his work.



Quick facts

- El Greco translates as 'the Greek' in English. He adopted this name when he was in Spain as a reference to his parentage.
- Saint Benedict's extended fingers are probably El Greco's way of drawing the viewer's attention to the tabernacle — a place on the altar where the bread and wine, symbols of Christ's flesh and blood, are kept for Communion.

Front: El Greco | *Saint Benedict (San Benito)* (detail) 1577–79 | Oil on canvas | 116 x 81cm | P817 | Collection: Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid | © Photographic Archive, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

Back: El Greco | *The Burial of Count Orgaz* (detail) 1586–88 | Oil on canvas | Collection: Sto Tome, Toledo, Spain | The Bridgeman Art Library



